

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 832

INFO AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 3398

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AFSP, UR, US

SUBJECT: CUSTOMS INSPECTION OF NON-DIPLOMATIC BAGGAGE

REF: MOSCOW 2637 (NOTAL),

1. EMBASSY MARCH 1 DELIVERED TO SOVIET CUSTOMS UNACCOMPANIED OUTGOING AIRFREIGHT SHIPMENTS OF MSGS P. WIMMER, R.MCCLINTIC AND J. HENDRIX. SOVIETS INSISTED ON RIGHTS OF INSPECTION AND LOCKS WERE DULY BROKEN AND BAGGAGE OPENED. SEARCH WAS METICULOUS AND SOME ITEMS FROM ALL THREE SHIPMENTS WERE WITHHELD AS LISTED PARA 2. SHIPMENTS MINUS THOSE ITEMS RESEALED AND ACCEPTED FOR OUTWARD SHIPMENT MARCH 3.

2. OBJECTS REMOVED AT DIRECTION OF SOVIET CUSTOMS HAVE BEEN TURNED OVER TO EMBASSY AS FOLLOWS:

(A) WIMMER: ONE GOLD RING; 4 SILVER RINGS;

(B) MCCLINTIC: ONE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CROSS; 3 SMALL R C CROSSES;

(C) HENDRIX: VASE FROM CENTRAL ASIA;
CAMERA WITH EXPOSED FILM; STAMPS; US DOLS 5:40
AUSTRIAN SCHILLINGS; 120 ZLOTYS AND 9 RUBLES.

3. EVEN THOUGH SOVIET CUSTOMS PROBABLY TECHNICALLY CORRECT IN ALL CASES, THEIR INTERPRETATION OF REGULATIONS IS RIGOROUS
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AND UNNECESSARILY STRICT. HENDRIX BRASS VASE, FOR EXAMPLE,

IS TYPICAL AND ORDINARY BERESKA STORE ITEMS (WITH STICKER SHOWING 12 RUBLES PRICE, BUT FORMAL RECEIPT NOT INCLUDED); WIMMER RINGS PRESUMABLY OK IF DECLARED BY HIM ON ENTRY; HENDRIX STAMPS AND VASE PATENTLY NOT VALUABLE NATIONAL TREASURES, ETC. ONLY ITEM OF ANY POSSIBLE VALUE IS MCCLINTIC RUSSIAN CROSS.

4. INCOMING SHIPMENT IS NOW IN CUSTOMS OF NEW NCOIC. SOVIETS INSIST IT MUST BE OPENED AND WE ARE WAITING HIS ARRIVAL TO ENABLE INSPECTION IN OWNER'S PRESENCE.

5. AT THIS POINT SOVIET POSITION APPEARS TO BE THAT ALL UNACCOMPANIED SHIPMENTS MSGS MUST BE INSPECTED. CASE OF US TEACHERS NOT YET TESTED.

6. EMBASSY URGES DEPARTMENT CONSULT WITH US CUSTOMS WITH VIEW TOWARD TAKING APPROPRIATE RECIPROCAL ACTION IN CASE OF UNACCOMPANIED BAGGAGE BELONGING TO NON-DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL ASSIGNED TO SOVIET EMBASSY WASHINGTON.

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